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TAGS: PINT, ELAB, IT

NORTHEAST ITALY:

SUBJ: LABOR OUTLOOK FOR 1978

1. SUMMARY. THE ALLEGIANCES OF THE 800,000 MEMBERS OF THE CGIL, CISL, AND UIL IN THE VENETO AND FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA REFLECT THE MIXTURE OF LARGE AND SMALL INDUSTRY, PORTS, AND AGRICULTURE THAT IS THE DOMINANT ECONOMIC FEATURE OF NORTHEAST ITALY. CISL DOMINATES IN THE CONSERVATIVE VENETO AND BY SKILLFUL TACTICS IN VENICE PROVINCE HAS EVEN WITTLED AWAY AT CGIL'S MEMBERSHIP LEAD IN THE MESTRE-MARGHERA INDUSTRIAL ZONE. IN FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA, ALTHOUGH CGIL HAS A SLIGHT PLUURAILTY OVER CISL, AN UNUSUALLY STRONG UIL IN TRIESTE PROVINCE KEEPS THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED UNION OUT OF THE DRIVER'S SEAT. UNION LEADERS, HOWEVER,

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ARE UNEASY ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION AND LONG FOR STRONG ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP FROM ROME TO CONVINCE THE RANK AND FILE TO SWALLOW THE BITTER AUSTERITY PILL. WITH NUMEROUS CONTRACTS EXPIRING IN 1978 DIRECTLY AFFECTING METALWORKERS, THE TOURISM SECTOR, AND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, UNION LEADERS ARE UNSURE WHETHER THEY CAN KEEP THE MEMBERSHIP IN LINE IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME PROMISE OF JOB SECURITY FOR THE
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FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE VENETO'S CISL LEADERSHIP HAS MAINTAINED A CLEAR LEAD IN THE BATTLE FOR MEMBERSHIP WITH OVER 290,000 OF THE REGION'S 600,000 UNION MEMBERS. ACCORDING TO REGIONAL SECRETARY LINO BRACCHI, CISL HAS SUCCEEDED IN EXPANDING ITS MEMBERSHIP FASTER THAN CGIL IN THE PAST YEAR AND PROSPECTS ARE GOOD FOR 1978. PARTICULARLY IN THE CGIL STRONGHOLD OF

VENICE PROVINCE WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR 64,000 OF THE COMMUNIST UNION'S 254,000 MEMBERS IN THE REGION, CISL HAS STOPPED THE CGIL ADVANCE BY INSTALLING THE AREA AN AGGRESSIVE AND ACTIVIST PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, BRUNO GEROMINI (WHOSE WIFE IS A PCI MEMBER). GEROMINI'S EFFORTS HAVE CAUSED DISMAY AMONG THE MORE CONSERVATIVE PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES IN PADOVA,

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BEELUNO, AND ROVIGO (WHERE CHRONIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND VICINITY TO EMILIA-ROMAGNA GIVE CGIL A 3-2 MEMBERSHIP MARGIN OVER CISL). BUT RESULTS HAVE LARGELY OVERCOME THE CRITICISM. MEANWHILE UIL'S 59,000 MEMBERS, CONCENTRATED PRIMARILY IN VENICE PROVINCE REMAIN LARGELY ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE ACTION. 3. FOR ALL ITS STRENGTH, HOWEVER, CISL IS FAR FROM COMPLACENT. ITALY'S ECONOMIC DOWNTURN HIT THE VENETO HARD IN 1977 AND ECONOMIC PROSPECTS FOR 1978 ARE NOT GOOD. THE UNION'S LEADERS HAVE INDICATED PRIVATELY THAT THINGS WILL PROBABLY GET WORSE BEFORE THEY GET BETTER, PARTICULARLY IN TEXTILES AND IN THE MESTRE-MARGHERA INDUSTRIAL ZONE. TO CONVINCE MEMBERS TO ACCEPT AUSTERITY, HOWEVER, THERE MUST BE SOME PROMISE OF JOB SECURITY AND, INCREASINGLY, JOB PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN AND THE YOUNG. (THERE ARE 22,000 YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE LISTA SPECIALE IN THE VENETO.) HAVING SUPPORTED CONFINDUSTRIA'S PROGRAM FOR 1978 THE CISL LEADERSHIP IS NOW WAITING FOR ROME TO COME UP WITH A PLAN THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEY CAN SUPPORT, IF NOT, CISL IN THE VENETO WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE A HARDER LINE WITH THE DC AND TO SUPPORT MORE ENTHUSIASTICALLY THE FEDERAZIONE UNITARIA WHICH THEY STRONGLY FEEL IS A CGIL/COMMUNIST INSTRUMENT.

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4. AS WITH MOST THINGS ECONOMIC IN ITALY'S NORTHEASTERNMOST REGION, THE LABOR SITUATION IN THE FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA IS A BIT DIFFERENT THAN ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. PERHAPS THE clearest example of this difference is that TRIESTE'S CAMERA DEL LAVORO (UNION HALL) HAS AS ITS PRESIDENT UIL REGIONAL SECRETARY CARLO FABRICCI, MAKING IT THE ONLY SUCH ORGANIZATION IN ITALY NOT IN THE HANDS OF OCIL. UIL WITH A LARGER CLAIMED MEMBERSHIP THAN CISL IN TRIESTE (THOUGH PUBLISHED FIGURES SHOW EACH HAS AROUND 17,000 MEMBERS) HAS RETAINED A STRONG LOCAL VOICE AND TENDS TO ALIGN ITSELF WITH THE LATTER IN STRUGGLES WITH THE NUMERICALLY LARGER CGIL (27,000 CARD CARRIERS) IN THE PROVINCE. REGIONALLY UIL HAS AN IMPORTANCE GREATER THAN ITS 34,000 MEMBERSHIP INDICATE BECAUSE CISL AND CGIL ARE IN A STAND-OFF--79,000 MEMBERS EACH.

5. MORE THAN IN THE VENETO, CISL IN FRIULI HAS SUPPORTED THE FEDERATION OF THE COUNTRY'S THREE MAJOR UNIONS IN AN EFFORT TO COMPLETE WITH CGIL FOR NEW MEMBERS. IN PORDENONE WHERE THE BATTLE IS LARGELY FOR ZANUSSI'S 12,000 WORKERS THE NEW PROVINCIAL CISL SECRETARY HAS SHOWN STRONG ALLEGIANCE TO THE FEDERAZIONE UNITARIA, UNLIKE HIS PREDECESSOR WHO OPENLY DID BATTLE WITH

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THE FEDERATION AND PUBLICALLY SUPPORTED THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN THE '76 NATIONAL ELECTIONS. MEANWHILE WORKERS IN THE PORT OF TRIESTE AND THE REGION'S HEAVY INDUSTRIES-ITALCANTIERI, GRANDI MOTORI TRIESTE (ENGINES), ITALSIDER (STEEL) AND OTHERS- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARE KEEPING UP THEIR PRESSURE FOR AN ECONOMIC PROGRAM THAT WILL GIVE JOB SECURITY AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION AND THEY ARE PUSHING THEIR LEADERS TO TAKE A HARDER LINE AGAINST WHAT THEY SEE AS THE GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF DECISIVENESS.

6. COMMENT. PROSPECTS FOR 1978 FOR THE UNIONS IN THE NORTH-EAST ARE UNCERTAIN. LEADERS OF BOTH CISL AND UIL HAVE PRIVATELY EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THEIR ABILITY TO MAINTAIN THE ALLEGIANCE OF THEIR RANK AND FILE IN THE FACE OF DIMINSHING JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND INCREASED PRESSURE FROM THE YOUNG AND WOMEN FOR A PLACE IN THE NATION'S ECONOMIC MAINSTREAM.

7. THESE LEADERS, NOT TO MENTION THEIR CGIL COUNTERPARTS, ARE PRESSING THEIR MEMBERS TO ACCEPT WAGERESTRAINT-AN UNFAMILIAR CONCEPT. TO DO SO THEY MUST SHOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING THE NECESSARY TO SIMULATE THE ECONOMY. THE LONGER ROME WAITS TO COPE WITH A REASONABLY STRONG ECONOMIC PROGRAM THE MORE LIKELY WORKERS WILL INSIST THAT THEIR LEADERS TAKE THE TRADI-

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TIONAL SHORT TERM SOLUTION OF WAGE INCREASE AND JOB PROTECTIONISM TO INSURE THEIR ECONOMIC SECURITY. MOEN.

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